



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Washington-Lee High School Student from Arlington to Represent Virginia at the
Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest
2007 National Finals in Washington, DC**

Richmond, VA – Alanna Rivera, a sophomore from Washington-Lee High School in Arlington, VA, won the 2007 Virginia State Finals of the *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* on March 8th, 2007 at the Library of Virginia in Richmond. Over 3900 students participated in Virginia and 18 of those students competed at the 2007 Virginia State Finals.

Reciting “Walking Down Park,” by Nikki Giovanni, “All This and More” by Mary Karr, and “A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General,” by Jonathan Swift, Ms. Rivera will go on to the national competition in Washington, D.C. April 30 and May 1, 2007, along with students representing every state.

Two other students were also recognized for their performances at the Virginia State Finals. Johnny Coyle, a senior from St. Christopher’s School in Richmond, VA, was the runner-up and Neelma Qureshi, a junior from J.E.B. Stuart High School in Falls Church, VA, took third place.

The judges for the 2007 Virginia State Finals included Dr. Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda, Virginia’s current Poet Laureate; Dr. Robert Porter, actor, director and theater professor from Blacksburg; d.l. Hopkins, actor and poet from Richmond; Tracy F. Robertson, English Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Education; and Lawrence M. Brown, Managing Director of SPARC, School of the Performing Arts in the Richmond Community.

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This was the second year for this program created by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation, in cooperation with the fifty state arts agencies, to encourage high school students to memorize and perform great poems. Each winner at the state level receives \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington to compete for the national championship. The state winner's school receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. A runner-up in each state receives \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The Poetry Foundation will be awarding \$50,000 total in scholarships and school stipends at the National Finals, with at least a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion. More information about the national final can be found at www.poetryoutloud.org

About the National Endowment for the Arts

This year, the National Endowment for the Arts marks its 40th anniversary of leadership in the arts. The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Arts Endowment is the largest national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine, is committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. One of the largest literary organizations in the world, it exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. For more information, please visit PoetryFoundation.org.

About The Virginia Commission for the Arts

The Virginia Commission for the Arts is the state agency that supports the arts through funding from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Commission distributes grant awards to artists, arts and other not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, educators and local governments, and provides technical assistance in arts management. For further information about the Commission and its programs, contact the Virginia Commission for the Arts at 804-225-3132; arts@arts.virginia.gov; www.arts.virginia.gov

About the Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion and has been a steward of the commonwealth's documentary and printed heritage since 1823. It serves as the reference library at the seat of government and as the official state archival repository. The Library preserves and provides access to 99.5 million manuscripts and 1.8 million books, serials, state and federal documents, bound periodicals, microfilm reels, and newspapers documenting four centuries of Virginia history. For more information visit www.lva.lib.va.us.

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